

Influenza Activity in Kansas as of January 14, 2004

The latest flu report from the Kansas Department of Health and Environment for the week ending January 10, 2004 (week 1) classifies flu activity in the state as "Local." The classification is based on a report of increased influenza-like illness (ILI) in one public health region and recent lab confirmed influenza in the effected area. This is the first week at this influenza activity level since the week ending November 22, 2003 (week 48) Kansas reported "Widespread" activity in weeks 50 and 51 (weeks ending December 13 and 20, 2003). In week 53, ending January 3, 2004, Kansas reported "Regional" influenza activity.

The number of states reporting widespread influenza activity decreased during week 53 (December 28, 2003 – January 3, 2004), the percentage of specimens testing positive for influenza also decreased, and the percentage of patient visits for influenza-like illness (ILI) decreased in all 9 (US) surveillance regions with an overall national percentage of 6.2% please see the CDC website <http://www.cdc.gov/flu/weekly/fluactivity.htm>. National results for week 1 should be posted on January 16, 2004 or soon after.

Laboratory tests have confirmed that primarily influenza type A N3H2 viruses are circulating in Kansas this season; strain information from CDC is pending. CDC has stated during a 12/15/2003 conference call that 71% to 82% of the influenza A isolates are of the Fujian. strain. Two presentation of influenza type B has also been confirmed by a rapid test in the Southeastern part of the state.

This season's vaccine was formulated to protect against type A/Panama, type A/New Caledonia and type B/Hong Kong and is expected to offer some protection against the A/Fujian strain.

KDHE strongly recommends flu shots for all high-risk individuals and everyone should be reminded to practice good respiratory etiquette i.e.

- Cover your nose and mouth with a tissue every time you cough or sneeze and throw the used tissue in the waste basket
- If you don't have a tissue, sneeze or cough into the crook of your elbow
- After sneezing/coughing, always wash your hands with soap and water or use an alcohol-based hand cleaner
- Stay home if you are sick.
- Do not share eating utensils, drinking glasses, towels or other personal items.

If you have any questions about influenza activity in Kansas or wish to become a sentinel site for surveillance, please contact Daniel Neises (785) 296-5585 or Kathleen Waters (785) 296-0028.